



STATE OF WASHINGTON
CONSERVATION COMMISSION

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June 2, 2006

TO: All Conservation Districts

FROM: Mark A. Clark
Executive Director

RE: Watershed Data Pilot Project Update

The Watershed Data Pilot Project (WDPP) was authorized and funded in the state 2005-2007 budget to “consolidate salmon and watershed data.” It specifically directs the WSCC to pilot a commercial vendor’s system that will provide Web access to collect and view habitat related project and health data collected by a variety of natural resource agencies. WSCC assembled a steering committee representing state and local partners, completed an open competitive procurement, and selected a vendor, ENKON Information Systems, to start work on the project as of May 15. 11 Conservation Districts were selected to participate in the project with the state departments of Ecology, Fish and Wildlife, and Natural Resources.

WDPP will focus on collecting and reporting on habitat data statewide from many sources to support understanding of what’s been done and what may be needed. WDPP will collect data on habitat related projects, and on implementation and effectiveness monitoring of those projects. Project data will be imported into WDPP from the PRISM and CREP databases. Data on many other types of local habitat projects will be directly entered. A handheld device will be piloted to collect effectiveness monitoring measures for riparian, water quality, and barrier projects. Also, GIS layers from state and local agencies will be included in WDPP to enable habitat data expressed in this form to be analyzed and combined with the project data. Extensive reporting capabilities will be available to the conservation districts to allow them access to all their data and the data from other agencies with appropriate security and confidentiality considerations. A report will be provided to the legislature by December 1, 2006 to describe the project’s experience, accomplishments, and opportunities for future value to the conservation districts and the state.

It’s very important to state that WDPP is not intended to replace any conservation district’s existing systems or to fully meet individual agency operational needs. It is a pilot project and will only continue if it proves it is valuable. It is intended to be helpful to all and will provide a unique consolidation of data and reporting capabilities. It is not intended to replace systems you have developed, acquired, or may be considering acquiring to meet your local operations management needs.

The WSCC looks forward to working with many of you to successfully complete this project. We will keep all of you informed and openly solicit your feedback on how this effort can be most useful to you. Please contact Carol Smith at WSCC at bioforsalmon@comcast.net or (360) 790-7330 with any questions.

More background on the project, the vendor selected, and future steps is provided below. Further background is available at the WDPP web page at <http://watershedpilot.scc.wa.gov/index.html>.

Watershed Data Pilot Project (WDPP) Update through May 2006

In April and early May, we concluded the procurement process. Work is underway. It focuses on requirements confirmation and system configuration. April's monthly update provided extensive project background. This update provides a brief background, and more detail on upcoming project objectives.

Background:

To fully address the pilot project's enabling legislation, WDPP will:

- Use a commercially provided Web-based system to capture data on Conservation District (CD) habitat projects and their specific habitat restoration objectives
- Capture habitat data that tracks improvements implemented by projects, and measurements of habitat health that provide evidence of projects' effectiveness
- Create a database that follows state and federal standards for project and monitoring data
- Capture data on as many projects as possible from the 10 participating CDs for a specified time frame (e.g. the past 2 years as a minimum set with more where possible)
- Develop handheld monitoring data collection capabilities for testing by multiple entities in one selected western Washington watershed
- Collaborate with state and local natural resource agencies to integrate GIS data layers to consolidate and make available habitat data from many agencies in a common format
- Make WDPP data accessible through flexible reporting by WSCC, CDs, partner agencies, and the public with appropriate confidentiality and security
- Complete the required legislative report by December 1, 2006
- Preserve all data and assets created by the WDPP.

Vendor Selection:

A thorough, fair, and open RFP process selected ENKON Information Systems. A contract has been signed. ENKON's strengths include:

- ENKON is a Pacific Northwest company (Victoria, BC and Seattle) with strong environmental credentials in habitat and environmental project implementation
- The ENKON enviroLIS system has an easy to navigate and understand user interface which is readily configurable to our requirements
- The system's database will easily support and encourage the standards-based data structure for projects, objectives, and monitoring data specified for WDPP
- GIS is tightly integrated with the system allowing GIS-based navigation of the data, reporting, and GIS-based analysis of WDPP data with GIS layers of environmental data imported from several entities
- Easy to use and very capable user accessible reporting tools with highly customizable output formats are included
- ENKON provides secure system hosting, application security, and support in use by their many clients and available as a service long term if needed (ASP model).

Project Status Highlights:

- WDPP remains close to schedule and budget
 - Work started May 15, 3 work days after the target date for vendor startup
 - The vendor bid was within budget with a 10% contingency
- Initial meetings with the 10 CDs to verify requirements were held May 22 – 23
- CDs were favorably impressed with the system and provided excellent input
- ENKON is updating the system configuration to reflect CD input
- Initial system use is targeted for July 17 – 2 months after start as planned
- CD implementation planning will determine the projects to be entered and reporting objectives for each CD and for statewide views.

In June and July, WDPP Will:

- Complete CD implementation planning
- Complete system configuration to enable initial use by July 17
- Complete imports of project data from CREP and PRISM databases
- Continue active stakeholder communications including a demonstration of the system on June 14.

Future Milestone Targets:

- Completion of import of state and local habitat related GIS layers by late August.
- Completion of adequate project and monitoring data capture late September
- Completion of reporting capabilities incrementally through late September
- Report to the legislature December 1 with incremental drafts through the summer and fall
- Final demonstrations through March 31, 2007

Challenges:

- An ambitious schedule and a tight budget
- Assuring a productive vendor startup and accurate system configuration process
- Creating CD implementation plans to assure adequate project and monitoring data capture and clear expectations
- Controlling project scope while including capabilities that will motivate CD and partner agency usage
- Identifying appropriate and productive uses for handheld data collection
- Identify policies and practices to manage CD project data confidentiality
- Coordinating and collaboratively completing the report to the legislature to reflect the concurrent efforts by several agencies to capture project and habitat data.